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SUBJECT: SEOUL - MEDIA REACTION

EAST ASIA AND PACIFIC: DPRK, PLANNED MISSILE LAUNCH

"North Korea Must be Brought to Book for Missile Launch"

Conservative Chosun Ilbo editorialized (03/13): "The essence of the problem is not whether North Korea gives advance notice. The carrier rocket 'Unha-2,' which will supposedly launch the 'Kwangmyongsong-2' satellite into orbit, is actually no different than a long-range missile. Accordingly, a 'satellite launch' is the same as test-firing a 'ballistic missile.' If the international community fails to admonish North Korea now, future efforts to prevent it from spreading weapons of mass destruction will lose considerable momentum. The stature of the UN and its Security Council will also be damaged. If North Korea fires a missile, the North must be held accountable so that it will not be able to escalate its tirades at the Six-Party Talks."

"Rational Discussion, Not Rash Displays of Power, Needed on Satellite Launch"

Left-leaning Hankyoreh Shinmun editorialized (03/13): "One will have to wait until North Korea launches whatever it launches to see what it is. Even if it is a satellite, it will be hard to differentiate it from a long-range missile, if it never enters its proper orbit. However, if the projectile does successfully enter its orbit, and Pyongyang has indeed taken the necessary preparatory actions, it will be hard to enact international sanctions. The U.S., Russia and China all used ballistic missile technology to successfully send satellites into orbit and it was never a problem. Iran, too, launched a satellite and was never confronted with sanctions, even though it is suspected of developing nuclear technology. It would, of course, be most desirable for North Korea not to push ahead with launching a satellite. Even if it does launch a satellite with the purest of intentions, it will have to convince the international community that it is not a threat. Pyongyang must refrain from doing anything that makes the situation worse or incites other parties. If it fires a satellite without dispelling the concerns of the international community, it will be hurting chances for resumption of the Six-Party Talks."

STEPHENS